

SAHEEH NAHJUL BALAGHA

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In the name of Allah the Most Gracious and Most Merciful,

The question regarding the Nahjul Balagha and its authenticity has been one that has echoed across the centuries; for it is a book that was compiled in the year 400 AH that does not include chains of narrators or sources.¹ This reality is what caused problems for those that held onto this book. The Shias remained in a state of confusion until contemporary times where Al-Sayyed Abdul-Zahra' Al-Khateeb wrote his Masadir Nahjul Balagha wa Asaneeduhu (The Sources and Chains of Nahjul Balagha) and gathered the evidences to create a foundation for Nahjul Balagha, one that would stand against the objections of doubters. The Shias were pleased with his conclusions and none of them raised a pen in criticism of his work. It is with this that we found it as an obligation for us to serve the Commander of the Faithful – may Allah be pleased with him - , for the lies that have been attributed to him have truly grown in number. We studied the chains and the sources that Al-Sayyed Abdul-Zahra' provided using the methodology of the Shia hadith criticism and we have provided the gradings based upon their criteria. Those interested in the details of that study can refer to our website.

In order to further compliment our research, we decided to compile whatever remained from the original work as a separate piece in a PDF format. This compilation focuses solely on providing the authentic sections of the sermons, letters, and sayings, without the additions of Al-Shareef Al-Radhi. **To be clear, all weak and unreliable sermons, letters, and sayings, were discarded from this authentic compilation.** We would sometimes point out key differences in the text from what we have found in the original sources, so whoever wishes to rely on the most accurate wordings should return to the sources that we have referred to in the footnotes.

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¹ We find in the headings of a few sermons that Al-Shareef Al-Radhi specifies his sources. For instance, he quotes Al-Umawi, Al-Waqidi, Al-Tabari, and other sources that are not relied upon by Shias. Those that are objective are aware that Al-Radhi based his compilation on all sorts of reports, and not exclude unreliable statements that have been attributed to the Commander of the Faithful.

The Sermons of the Commander of the Faithful

Sermon 16 - Delivered when allegiance was sworn to him at Medina: The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. He to whom experiences have clearly shown the past exemplary punishments (given by Allah to peoples) is prevented by piety from falling into doubts. You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet was first sent. By Allah who sent the Prophet with faith and truth, you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low, those who were behind would attain forward positions and those who were forward would become backward. By Allah, I have not concealed a single word or spoken any lie and I had been informed of this event and of this time. Beware that sins are like unruly horses on whom their riders have been placed and their reins have been let loose so that they would jump with them in Hell. Beware that piety is like trained horses on whom the riders have been placed with the reins in their hands, so that they would take the riders to Heaven. There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has (always) in the past been so, and if truth goes down that too has often occurred. It seldom happens that a thing that lags behind comes forward.²

Sermon 17 - About those who sit for dispensation of justice among people but are not fit for it: Among all the people the most detested before Allah are two persons. One is he who is devoted to his self. So he is deviated from the true path and loves speaking about (foul) innovations and inviting towards wrong path. He is therefore a nuisance for those who are enamored of him, is himself misled from the guidance of those preceding him, misleads those who follow him in his life or after his death, carries the weight of others' sins and is entangled in his own misdeeds. The other man is he who has picked up ignorance. He moves among the ignorant, is senseless in the thick of mischief and is blind to the advantages of peace. Those resembling like men have named him scholar but he is not so. He goes out early morning to collect things whose deficiency is better than plenty, till when he has quenched his thirst from polluted water and acquired meaningless things, he sits among the people as a judge responsible for solving whatever is confusing to the others. If an ambiguous problem is presented before him he manages shabby argument about it of his own accord and passes judgment on its basis. In this way he is entangled in the confusion of doubts as in the spider's web, not knowing whether he was right or wrong. If he is right he fears lest he erred, while if he is wrong he hopes he is right. He is ignorant, wandering astray in ignorance and riding on carriages aimlessly moving in darkness. He did not try to find

² Al-Kulayni narrated it in Rawdhat Al-Kafi p. 67 and it includes significant additions, like: "The first to transgress was Inaq the daughter of Adam... and she had twenty fingers with two sickle-shaped nails on each. Allah the Almighty then sent a lion-elephant, a wolf-camel, and an eagle-mule upon her, and they killed her."

reality of knowledge. He scatters the traditions as the wind scatters the dry leaves. By Allah, he is not capable of solving the problems that come to him nor is fit for the position assigned to him. Whatever he does not know he does not regard it worth knowing. He does not realize that what is beyond his reach is within the reach of others. If anything is not clear to him he keeps quiet over it because he knows his own ignorance. Lost lives are crying against his unjust verdicts, and properties (that have been wrongly disposed of) are grumbling against him. I complain to Allah about persons who live ignorant and die misguided. For them nothing is more worthless than the Qur'an if it is recited as it should be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Qur'an if its verses are removed from their places, nor anything more vicious than virtue nor more virtuous than vice.³

Sermon 50 - Admixture of right and wrong: The basis of the occurrence of evils are those desires which are acted upon and the orders that are innovated. They are against the Book of Allah. People co-operate with each other about them even though it is against the Religion of Allah. If wrong had been pure and unmixed it would not be hidden from those who are in search of it. And if right had been pure without admixture of wrong those who bear hatred towards it would have been silenced. What is, however, done is that something is taken from here and something from there and the two are mixed! At this stage Satan overpowers his friends and they alone escape for whom 'virtue has been apportioned by Allah from before'.⁴

Sermon 95 - I have seen the companions of the Prophet but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on the hair and face (in hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. With the recollection of their resurrection it seemed as though they stood on live coal. It seemed that in between their eyes there were signs like knees of goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled for fear of punishment and hope of reward as the tree trembles on the day of stormy wind.⁵

Sermon 202 - May Allah have mercy on you! Provide yourselves for the journey because the call for departure has been announced.⁶

³ Al-Kulayni narrated in Al-Kafi 1/55. It includes many differences in wording and order.

⁴ Al-Barqi narrated it in Al-Mahasin 1/208 and Al-Kulayni in Al-Kafi 1/54.

⁵ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Usool Al-Kafi 2/236. It includes Ma'rouf bin Kharbouth who is reliable in the eyes of those that accept the authentication that is based upon the narrators of Ali bin Ibrahim Al-Qummi in his exegesis of the Qur'an.

⁶ Al-Saduq narrates it in his Al-Amali in the 75th Gathering.

The Letters of the Commander of the Faithful

Letter 24- The following is the will of Imam Ali in which he has left instructions as to how to treat his property and estate. It was written after his return from the Battle of Siffeen: This is what `Ali bin Abi Talib, the slave of Allah has laid down about his property, in pursuance of seeking Allah's pleasure so that He may by virtue of it give him entry into Paradise and accord him peace. From the will: It will be administered by Hasan ibn `Ali. He will take from it a suitable portion for his livelihood and spend it on charity. If something happens to Hasan, and Husayn survives he will administer it after Hasan, and deal with it accordingly. In the charitable estate of the two sons of Fatimah they have the same rights as the all (other) sons of `Ali. I have laid down the (functions of) administration of the two sons of Fatimah in order to seek the pleasure of Allah and nearness to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his descendants) with due regard for his honor and consideration of his kinship. It is obligatory on him who administers it that he retains the estate as it is, and spends the usufruct as he has been ordered and instructed. He should not sell the seedlings in the plantations of these villages till the land changes its face by turning them into plants. As for those of my slave girls who were under me, if any one of them has a child or is pregnant, she will be retained for the sake of the child and will form part of his share. If the child dies and she survives, then she is free, bondage is removed from her and liberty is given to her.⁷

Letter 25: Instructions to assessors and collectors of Zakat: Move on with the fear of Allah Who is One and has no partner. Do not frighten any Muslim. Do not pass over his lands so as to make him feel unhappy. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you go to a tribe, you should get down at their watering place instead of entering their houses. Then proceed towards them with peace and dignity till you stand among them. Then salute them and do not be remiss in greeting them, then say to them, "O servants of Allah, the vicegerent of Allah and His caliph has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share in your properties. Is there anything of His share in your properties? If so, give it to His vicegerent." If someone among them says "No", then do not repeat the demand. If someone speaks to you in the affirmative, then go with him without frightening him, threatening him, pressuring him or oppressing him. Take what he gives you such as gold or silver (coins). If he has cattle or camels do not enter upon them save with his permission, because their major part is his. Therefore, when you get there do not enter upon them like one who has full control over them or in a violent manner. Do not scare any

⁷ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 7/49 and it includes an important additions: "If something was to occur to Al-Hasan and Al-Hussain, then the latter of them should look into the children of Ali. If they find one that they accept in his Islam, guidance, and trustworthiness, then to him it is handed over. If he does not find one like that, then he shall look into the children of Abu Talib that he is satisfied with. If he finds that the notable children of Abu Talib have passed away, then he is to leave it to whomever he wishes from Bani Hashim."

animal, do not tease anyone and do not let the owner feel grieved about anyone. Divide the property into two parts and let the owner choose one. When he has chosen do not object to it. Then divide the remaining into two parts and let him choose one and when he has chosen do not raise any objection. Continue like this till only that much remains which is enough to satisfy Allah's dues. Then take Allah's due from it. If he disputes your action allow his views, then mix the two (separated) parts and repeat what you had done before till you take Allah's due from his property. Do not take an old, decrepit, broken-limbed, sick or unsound animal. Do not entrust the animals (for custody) except to one whom you trust to take care of Muslims' property till he hands it over to their chief who will distribute it. Do not entrust it to anyone except he who is a well wisher, God-fearing, trustworthy and watchful, and who is not harsh on Muslims' property, nor makes them run too much, nor tires them, nor labors them. Then send to us all that you have collected and we shall deal with it as Allah has ordered. When your trustee takes over (the animal) tell him that he should not separate the she-camel from its young and should not milk all its milk because that would affect its young, and also that he should not exert it in riding. In this matter, he should behave justly between it and all its companions. He should allow rest to camels (who are tired), and drive with ease those whose hoofs have been rubbed off. When you pass a water spring stay the camels there for drinking and do not take them away from vegetated land to barren paths. He should allow them rest now and then, and give them time near water and grass. In this way, when they reach us by leave of Allah, they will be fat with plenty of marrow and would not be fatigued or distressed. We will then distribute them according to the (commands of) the Book of Allah and the *sunnah* of His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). Certainly, this will be a great source of reward for you and a means to secure guidance, if Allah so wills.⁸

Letter 47: Will To Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn after he was wounded by Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam whilst offered the morning prayers in the mosque of Kufa: I advise you (both) to fear Allah and that you should not hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you have been denied. Speak the truth and act (in expectation) for reward. Be an enemy of the oppressor and helper of the oppressed. I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches, to fear Allah, to keep your affairs in order, and to maintain good relations among yourselves for I have heard your grand-father (the Holy Prophet – peace be upon him and his progeny - saying, "Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and fasting." (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of orphans. So do not allow them to starve and they should not be ruined in your presence. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your neighbors, because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favor till we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of the Qur'an. No one should excel you in acting upon it. (Fear) Allah (and) keep

⁸ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 3/536 with differences in wordings.

Allah in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'bah). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of jihad with the help of your property, lives and tongues in the way of Allah. You should keep to a respect for kinship and spending for others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then if you will pray, the prayers will not be granted.⁹

Letter 68 - Now, the example of the world is like that of a snake which is soft in touch but whose poison is fatal.¹⁰

⁹ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 7/51 and it includes an important addition: “(Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of the companions of your prophet whom did not commit an uncommon severe crime nor those that gave them refuge, for the Messenger – peace be upon him and his progeny – willed for them to be taken good care of and damned those from among them and others that committed an uncommon severe crime or gave refuge to those that did.”

¹⁰ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 2/136 with major differences in wording.

The Sayings of the Commander of the Faithful

36- The Commander of the Faithful said: Whoever prolongs his desire ruins his actions.¹¹

89- The Commander of the Faithful said: If a man sets right matters between himself and Allah, then Allah sets right matters between him and other people; and if a man sets right the affairs of his next life then Allah sets right for him the affairs of this world. Whoever is a preacher for himself is protected by Allah.¹²

90- The Commander of the Faithful said: The perfect jurist of Islam is he who does not let people lose hope from the mercy of Allah, does not make them despondent of Allah's kindness and does not make them feel safe from Allah's punishment.¹³

271- It is related that two persons were brought to the Commander of the Faithful. They had committed theft of public property. One of them was a slave purchased from public money and the other had been purchased by someone among the people. Then the Commander of the Faithful said: As for this one who is the property of public money, there is no punishment for him for it means one property of Allah having taken another property of Allah. As for the other, he should get the punishment. **Consequently, his hand was cut.**¹⁴

302- The Commander of the Faithful said: The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in greater need of praying than the one who has been spared affliction but is not immune from it.¹⁵

365- The Commander of the Faithful said: Imagination is a clear mirror, and the taking of lessons (from things around) provides warning and counsel. It is enough for improving yourself that you should avoid what you consider bad in others.¹⁶

447- The Commander of the Faithful said: Whoever trades without knowing the rules of religious law will be involved in usury.¹⁷

478- The Commander of the Faithful said: Allah has not made it obligatory on the ignorant to learn till He has made it obligatory on the learned to teach.¹⁸

¹¹ Al-Hussain bin Sa'eed Al-Ahwazi narrated in Al-Zuhd p. 81, Al-Kulayni narrated in Al-Kafi 1/71, and Al-Saduq narrated it in Al-Khisal 1/11.

¹² Al-Barqi narrated it in Al-Mahasin 1/29, Al-Kulayni in Al-Rawdha p. 307, and Al-Saduq in Al-Khisal 1/22 and Al-Amali p. 62. The chains revolve around Al-Nawfali who is reliable in the eyes of those accept that the authentication that is based upon the narrators of Ali bin Ibrahim Al-Qummi in his exegesis of the Qur'an.

¹³ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 1/36 and Al-Saduq in Ma'ani Al-Akhbar p. 226.

¹⁴ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 7/264.

¹⁵ Al-Saduq narrated it in Al-Amali p. 159.

¹⁶ Al-Tusi narrated it in Al-Amali 1/114.

¹⁷ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 5/154 and Al-Saduq in Al-Faqeeh 3/120.

¹⁸ Al-Kulayni narrated it in Al-Kafi 1/41.

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